

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES
Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2002
Alaska Building, 13th Floor
Seattle, WA 98104**

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Present: Marc Avni, Martha Becker, Pat Carroll, Gabe Cohen, Steve Colwell, Thelma Coney, Timmie Faghin, John Kennedy, Will Parry, Mae Shields, Karen Sluiter, Helen Spencer, Suzanne Wiley, Fred Yee

Absent: Cleo Corcoran, Lee Gaylor, Suzanne Gehring, Randy Hayhurst

Excused: Juanita Grant, Greg Stack

Guests: Joanne Donahue, Ariene Felix DeGuzman, John Holecek, Eileen Murphy, Gary Tang, David Trainer, Larry Verhei, Catharine Wu, Connie Wurm,

STAFF: Margaret Casey, Rosemary Cunningham, Peggy O'Brien-Murphy, Pam Piering, Allison Ruff, Linda Wells, Karen Winston

Minutes

Karen Sluiter, Chair, convened the meeting at 12:00 p.m. The minutes of February 8, 2002 were approved.

Program:

*Panel Discussion of Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A)
Advocacy Issues: Supporting Quality Community Care – Stories from the Field.*

Connie Wurm spoke to the Council about her work as a discretionary case manager for Aging & Disability Services in South King County. For the past four years, she has been serving elderly clients over 60 who live in their own homes and who are not on Title 19 (Medicaid, Personal Care & COPES). Her goal has been to educate people about their options and link them with needed available services.

One of her clients is an 85-year-old woman who lives alone, has a monthly income of approximately \$780, and suffers from dementia. Her husband died last summer. An older sister and a close friend have power of attorney and have assisted in helping her stay in her own home. Although she is eligible for Title 19 home services, she declined this assistance because of estate recovery requirements. Estate recovery affects any senior who owns their home and receives Title 19 services. The State offers services to elderly homeowners who need them, as long as the state can recover costs for these services when their home is sold. This is a difficult decision as many seniors have worked hard all their lives for their home and they don't want it turned over to the government when they die. Often it's the only thing they have to leave to their children. Fortunately, this client had family, friends and neighbors who were able to provide enough care to keep her in her home. Nonetheless, professional help was needed and Connie was initially called because of nutrition problems. Although the client was provided Meals on Wheels, she was eating poorly. Her cognitive disabilities made it impossible for her to learn how to use a microwave to heat the frozen meals. Severe weight loss prompted a call to ADS for help.

Connie was able to help with nutrition and in other areas also - a new mattress was needed to replace the heavily soiled mattress that husband had used during his last year of life. Fortunately, the **Amy Wong Fund** was able to provide funds for the new mattress.

Another client is an 85-year old man with severe dementia and a drug addicted grandson who was financially exploiting his grandfather. The older gentleman was hard of hearing, visually impaired, had high

blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and swelling in both legs. He was fiercely determined to stay in his own home. His doctor called Adult Protective Services (APS) because of the grandson's physical abuse and financial exploitation of the man. APS referred the case to ADS. While the client functionally qualified for Title 19 services he was not income eligible. When Connie met him he was confused, had difficulty following thoughts and hadn't eaten all day. After setting up private pay services for a daily caretaker, and an LPN twice a month, plus receiving regular meals, baths, physical therapy and monitored medications, he became clear of mind, the swelling in his legs went down and he was even able to get around on his own without the aid of a walker. A Power of Attorney (POW) was needed only to assist in handling his affairs.

ADS case managers are funded for 88 clients yet many carry a caseload of 95 clients. Heavy caseloads make quality service extremely difficult to provide and create a necessary dependence on churches, neighbors, family, mail-carriers, caregivers, meals on wheels drivers, and others to be eyes and ears – alert to signs of distress or danger. Are newspapers piling up on front porch? Are there signs of activity in the home? All these are critical issues for seniors living alone at home. (Perhaps we could say, “it takes a village...”)

Ariene Felix DeGuzman from Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) has been working with Seattle Housing Authority elderly Filipino clients. Education is essential for their clients she says, especially on medical and legal issues. So many elderly clients are isolated, and many die in the wintertime. She spoke of a client with dementia, who is very frail, lives alone, and whose working daughter is her only support. This client expected a lot from her daughter and the resulting dependency and exhaustion on both sides caused tension and bitterness to develop. The daughter held two jobs to cover expenses. Because of the constant calls and demands of her mother, she couldn't sleep through the night. Although the mother qualified for assistance, COPES does not provide night coverage to allow a caregiver to sleep. Soon mother and daughter were caught up in a tangle of stress and found themselves laden with burnout, exhaustion, bitterness and power struggles. The daughter had POW, yet the mother wanted to hold onto power. Tension increased and the client refused to eat unless all her wishes were granted. Stress can quickly change the atmosphere in any household. Five assessments were done in six months to justify small yet necessary changes. Each assessment takes at least 2 hours – and sometimes it's only to justify one more hour of assistance.

Both Connie and Ariene noted that mental illness is almost as prevalent as dementia, depression and anxiety. Medications, diet, blood sugar, etc can affect all paranoia disorders. Additionally, because dementia brings a stigma, it's hard for families to acknowledge such problems and they need extra encouragement and education to be able to get medical help for these conditions. It's quite clear, that with many clients, case management has become an urgently vital and fundamental safety net.

Gary Tang, program director at ACRS, spoke to the Council about services they provide. Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) is a multi cultural agency with multi lingual staff who interview clients in their own language and in their own community. ACRS is one of two agencies in the state that provide multi lingual services to Asian Pacific communities. Case managers speak 17 languages & dialects. ACRS provides initial assessment and case management services for about 1200 clients.

Most clients are uneducated immigrants or refugees and frequently they do not understand the medical diagnosis. Case managers must be aware of many legal and medical issues and be able to explain to the clients and their families what can and cannot be done. While American elders like their independence, Asian clients tend to be attached to their families and not individually independent. Too often, for the growing numbers of elderly refugee and immigrant clients, independence usually means isolation. ACRS has learned that deaths among isolated elders increase during the winter season. As a result, case managers

do extra holiday activities for these clients. The down side of this is that time and again clients will expect the case manager to do extra work for them.

Typically, ACRS works with the whole family. Caseloads are 70-80 per case manager. Initial assessment takes 14-20 hours and changes are often necessary as different family members become involved. Standard response time to a call is 8 hours. An emergency call is responded to within 30-minutes. By state requirement, all assessments and assignment made to case managers must be made within 30 days or they must start over.

The council expressed their appreciation and thanks to Connie, Ariene and Gary for an excellent discussion and for the outstanding work they do.

Committee Reports

Director's Report:

Pam Piering announced that in July 2003 there will be a new comprehensive assessment (tool used to determine clients level of need) designed along the lines of the Oregon model developed by Deloitte. Lap top computers will allow information from assessments to be completed while in the field. Drop down menus on the computer programs will make entries easy and take away the concern that an entry must be written in a certain way or services may be disallowed. It is anticipated that, after special training, case managers will find the new tool more accurate and time-saving for all involved.

The Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Project is continuing this year and we hope to expand the number of seniors receiving fresh fruits and vegetables at home. In addition, the "PEARLS" research study with the University of Washington is addressing depression in homebound elders. The study involves one group of homebound seniors-receiving problem solving therapy – an intervention of 6-7 in-home visits with follow-up phone calls. A control group is receiving no intervention. At this point, the intervention program is going so well that the UW is applying for money now to start the intervention on the control group rather than waiting until the 5-year study project has been completed.

Pam thanked **Will Parry** for his timely and excellent article in the Retiree Advocate Newsletter on health disparity issues for ethnic minority elders. Pam also thanked **Gabe Cohen** for his work on the Hand-in-Hand Generations United Celebration at the Seattle Center. Interdependence between generations is very worthy of support in our communities - and it's a great advantage to have programs that show mutual benefit for seniors & younger people working together.

Health Care Task Force: **Martha Becker** thanked **Margaret Casey** for her excellent job in walking the Health Care Task Force through the maze of funding possibilities for caregiving programs. The next Task Force meeting on June 4th, will focus on transportation issues and adult day centers. A goal is to develop a coalition that will focus on making transportation more readily accessible to people who need it.

Outreach & Advocacy **Gabe Cohen** reported that the April n4a Advocacy Training Workshop was very well attended and definitely educational. Role-playing and other exercises were great in driving points home. Excellent handouts were provided including suggestions on how to contact and communicate information to our elected representatives.

Co-Chair, **Cleo Corcoran** is developing a framework of goals and objectives for outreach for the committee.

Susan Wiley and **Lee Gaylor** spoke to the Bellevue Human Services Commission about the work of our Advisory Council. They were well received and this (dialogue) is a process that Gabe hopes to expand to other groups. A template has been developed by **Karen Winston** for giving such reports.

A Legislative Forum is being planned for the fall. There will be a 2 billion shortfall to deal with in the next legislative session. The Advocacy & Outreach Committee discussed having the Forum look at the issue of tax reform. **Will Parry** is a part of a coalition that is working on tax reform. The coalition focus will include considering alternative ways to raise more revenue while making the overall system more equitable and, exploring short term and long possibilities for legislative tax reform. Gabe suggested this group could give a report at the Legislative Forum.

Nominating & Selection Committee: **Marc Avni** reported that the committee is now active in finding recruits to be on the Advisory Council. The committee met at the STAR Center to interview 5 King County candidates. A letter is being prepared for the King County Executive with the committee's recommendations. Hopefully, we may have three new members on the Council in August.

Technology Committee: **Timmie Faghin** reported that the committee is continuing their work on the AC website and would like input from AC members. AC home page printouts were passed around and members were encouraged to take a look and call in their comments. The committee is currently working on who we are and news and events. Please check it out the site and give feedback to Timmie.
<http://www.cityofseattle.net/humanservices/ads/AdvisoryCouncil/>

Announcements

Will Parry announced that the Tax Reform group is holding their next meeting on May 16 at the Washington Association of Churches - 419 Occidental Avenue S.

Helen Spencer announced a Housing Forum meeting on May 22, at the Auburn Senior Center Activity Center. The forum will examine different kinds of housing available in King County – including a discussion on universal housing issues. Lunch will be provided.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 1:50 PM

PUBLIC COMMENT ON 2002 SUPPLEMENTAL DISCRETIONARY ALLOCATIONS BEGAN AT 2:05 PM

Next Meeting: June 14, 2002, Noon - 2:00 PM
Alaska Building, 618 Second Ave
13th Floor Conference Room
Seattle, WA 98104
For information call 206/684-0490

Suzanne Wiley, Secretary-Treasurer _____

Public Hearing: **Suzanne Wiley** announced that the purpose of this public hearing is to receive comments from the community regarding the proposed allocation of Supplemental Discretionary Funds and the proposed changes on the percentage distribution of the 2002 National Family Caregivers Support Program

Fund. Suzanne reported that comment letters have been received from Senior Services and Eastside Adult Day Services.

Highlights of proposal: We have an additional \$429,993 available to supplement the original 2001 allocation. The increase is primarily from the Older Americans Act and some 2001 carry-over funds. Committee was concerned about adding money to the base funding which (because of budget cuts) would not be available in the following years.

P&A Recommendations:

- A 2% inflationary adjustment to current discretionary programs

- Addition to the technology support

- Increases to nutrition services